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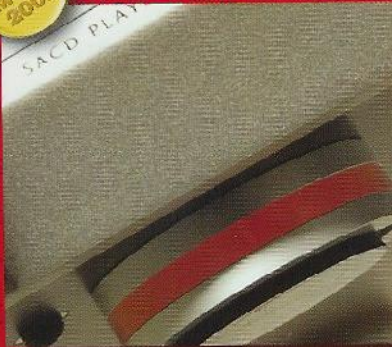
PURE AUDIO EXCELLENCE

November 2005

£3.90



CD PLAYERS



LOUDSPEAKERS



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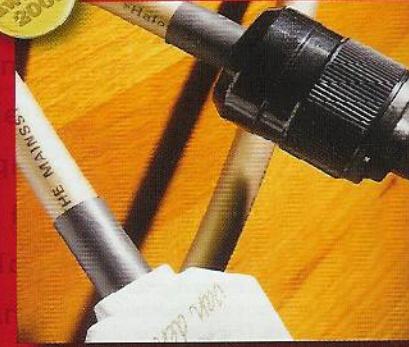
TURNTABLES



AV EQUIPMENT



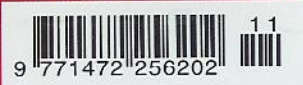
ACCESSORIES



Hi-Fi News Awards 2005



AOL Keyword: Hi-Fi News
US \$ 9.00 Canada \$ 9.75 Aus \$ 10.25





Above: Custom ring dome tweeter in new 19mm size



Above: Driver of custom bonded-fibre handles low and mid frequencies

bass and a superior soundstage with pinpoint focus and impressive scale and depth.

The Concertino is beautifully finished with curved, lute-shaped hardwood sides and a distinctive top quality leatherette wrap for the remaining panels, founded on high-density board material.

SOUND QUALITY

My experience with the previous Concertino was a good one and it proved to be a lively performer with a strong heart for such a compact design. As

to aim the beam a little above the listener's ears. This is a bid by the designer to achieve a degree of time alignment between the mid and treble of the system, and by all accounts he has succeeded.

After some preliminary adjustment with placement, setting the spikes, choosing the spacing to the wall behind the speakers — in this case closer than usual at about 0.4m — listening could begin.

What was delivered was a soundstage out of all proportion to the size and price. The Concertino Domus clearly aspires to greatness, and succeeds in generating

any false brightness or related exaggeration to the sound.

This speaker plays remarkably loud, obviously not in the truly big speaker league but well beyond the ability of the £300 to £400 compacts, a tribute to the good motor design and effective bass loading for the low-frequency driver.

Enclosure coloration is very low thanks to the dense and well-damped construction, while the drivers themselves are well behaved. The mid is nicely transparent even if it has just a bit of emphasis on French horn. The bass is a little dry, avoiding any boominess and has good punch and tune

The Concertino Domus clearly aspires to greatness, and succeeds in generating a stereo image of exceptional focus

A Custom matching steel stand (left) places speaker above level of listener's ears which, together with a slight tilt, aims to achieve a degree of time alignment between the mid and treble of the system

may have been fashionable at the time, the treble was set a little bright and best tonal balance was achieved with the enclosures aligned 10 or 15° away from the listener.

Without a doubt the new Domus series Concertino differs from the old and by comparison is perceptibly dull in the treble. Consequently most users will direct the new speaker at the listening seat to make the most of it. Additionally the matching speaker stand is quite high, with the speaker intentionally tilted upwards

a stereo image of substantial scale, exceptional focus and considerable depth.

The images created were nicely layered with natural, stable perspectives. You felt that the designer's intention was to recreate a sense of musical performance, richly detailed and atmospheric with the speaker capable of recovering much of the hall ambience encoded in the recording.

What was surprising was the quality of dynamics, the drive and sense of energy provided; this achieved without

playing down to 40Hz or so. It does not try to go deeper and thus avoids trouble. The treble is quite special, vice free, and it avoids the often-encountered nasality. It has clean sibilants, and sounds sparkling and airy in the room acoustic. It is also transparent. Violin timbre is particularly convincing.

Vocals are full-bodied, articulate and well focused, and it is as impressive on rock as it is on classical material.

Sensitivity is quite good for a compact and decently loud results were possible with a



Both drivers are fed via a single pair of gold-plated binding posts with 4mm sockets

SONUS STATS



are provided by a 150mm diecast frame driver with a custom bonded-fibre cone, and an open pole is fitted with a fixed termination. Crossing over at about 3.5kHz, the high range is covered by a new tweeter, a custom variation on the famous ring dome from DST Tympany, Denmark, this time in the smaller '19mm' size.

The crossover is initially first-order for good phase response, and has secondary components to help tailor the blend of the driver outputs. Top-quality

It's a two-way bass reflex design, tuned by a large, front-mounted port. Low and mid frequencies

components are used. Both drivers are magnetically-shielded as the Concertino is, of course, a member of a range of speakers for home cinema use.

The specified frequency response is 50Hz to 20kHz given without limits, but in fact $\pm 3\text{dB}$ would be appropriate. The sensitivity is good for the size at 88dB though 4 ohm impedance is stated.

The recommended matching steel stand has a large, stable footprint and sets the speakers at a designed angle of up tilt. The stand may also be locked to the speaker to make a safer assembly.

Connections are single-wired via gold-plated binding posts with 4mm sockets. As very occasionally happens, my sample came with one bass unit connected out of phase and this proved simple to correct for the review.

clean 100W per channel making them suitable for even medium-sized rooms if very high levels were not required.

In the room the sound had much of the stature of a larger and more costly design and is an undoubted success.

SENSIBLE LOAD

For its size the Domus range's Concertino is quite sensitive and has exceptional power handling. It also presents a sensible load to the matching amplifier, and several valve/tube models are thus suitable candidates. What's more, the frequency responses are fine both on- and off-axis and the distortion is moderate.

The build quality and finish are both exceptional, and with

its well designed and effective matching stand it becomes a elegant assembly of optimal performance and safety.

It excels in providing generous sound images of great scale and clarity with natural perspectives. However, the high quality of the drivers and the system design ensures that there is no loss of detail or clarity. The whole plays more like a larger and more expensive design, with great hall ambience.

Now consider that attractive punchy, dynamic, rhythmic character also seen in the classic Sonus Faber designs and you can see that we have a real winner in the Concertino Domus standmounter. It's firmly recommended. ■



Front-firing port makes for a claimed 50Hz to 20kHz frequency response while the stands may be locked to the speaker for safety; those real wood cheeks ensure domestic acceptability

THE REPORT

TECH DETAILS • VERDICT

REVIEW SYSTEM

- Marantz and Orelle CD players
- Orelle SA 100 Evo 2 integrated amplifier
- Van den Hul Jade speaker cable
- Wireworld Equinox interconnect
- Mana Acoustics platforms

SUPPLIER

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TECH SPEC

Two-way loudspeaker, front reflex port	
Sensitivity:	88dB SPL (2.83V/1m)
Nominal Impedance:	4 ohms
Power Handling:	30W – 150W, without clipping
Dimensions:	180 x 270 x 330mm (wdh)
Weight:	26.5 lbs per pair

VERDICT

Full-bodied vocals, sparkling treble, punchy, tuneful bass and all from a speaker with much of the stature of sound of larger and more costly designs. Add great looks and superb build quality and the Concertino Domus is a real winner.